

THE BULLETIN'S SUNDAY SERMON

BY REV. FRANK DE WITT TALMAGE, D. D.

Los Angeles, Cal., July 3.—To the discouraged, to those who have made what the world calls a failure of life as well as to the impatient and dissatisfied, this sermon conveys a practical lesson. The text is Exodus xiv, 13, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

To fall back, in order to go forward; to retreat, in order to advance; to evacuate, in order to conquer; age, that is the course most great military chiefs have had to take, at least once in life, before they won their ultimate triumphs. Such a line of tactics won for our nation that independence the anniversary festival of which we are soon to celebrate. George Washington at Yorktown would never have been possible had there not first been a Washington's retreat from Long Island. When General Mifflin, with a small detachment of troops acting as sentinels over wooden guns, deceived the British army while the American troops, in a dense fog, quietly paddled past Lord Howe's fleet and slipped through the fingers of Sir Henry Clinton, America's liberties were rescued from almost certain strangulation. Had Washington stayed to obstinately hold his ground after the bloody battle of Long Island, the American army would have been annihilated or captured. It is not always a good plan for a general to cut his bridges behind him. Had there been no retreat from Bohemia after the battle of Kolin, and no evacuation of Berlin after the slaughter of Kunersdorf, there would have been no humiliation of a Maria Theresa, and no Frederick the Great, whose name has been the marvel not only of Prussia, but of all Europe and the civilized world. Nathaniel Greene, the mighty military leader of the Revolutionary war, second only in power to George Washington, was aptly called "The Great Retreater." He never won a decisive battle in his life. So it has been with other military chieftains. There is strategy in eluding a foe whose strength is superior. Many a general has kept the field and worn out the patience of an enemy by avoiding a decisive battle and in the end has proved victorious.

Can Do Nothing but Wait.

There may come times in the battle of life when a man is to fight, and times when a man is to run. There also come other times when a man is to be like a Moses "encamped before Pharaoh," between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon. On the one side of him was the Red sea, on the other side of him were the pursuing hosts of the Philistines. He could not run. There was no place to run to. He could not fight Pharaoh. He knew he would have been annihilated in the conflict. He could do nothing but wait. He had to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." Moses was like Sir Henry Lawrence, entrapped in the recidency of Lucknow during the sepoey rebellion of 1857. For three long months the little English garrison, surrounded by a hundred thousand murderous demons, had to do nothing but wait. They just kept on waiting for the rescuers, who fought their way up from Calcutta under the leadership of that hero of heroes, Sir Henry Havelock. Moses was like General Charles Gordon, who for ten long months just had to wait and continue to wait in the besieged city of Khartoum, and then gave up his life only a few days before the English rescuers came in sight. Moses was like the foreigners, praying and hoping and hoping and praying in the missionary compounds of Peking, waiting for the allied troops to deliver them from their impending fate during the Boxer uprising of China in 1900. They were too strong as a body to have to surrender. They were not strong enough as a body to fight their way to the English ships. And so, hemmed in and driven in on all sides, they just stood their ground, fighting for their existence by day and sleeping on their guns by night. They were waiting—simply waiting. They were standing still, to see the salvation of the Lord.

Very easy it is for most of us to go forward in the battle of life when the divine command is given clearly and distinctly: "Charge! Let the whole line charge!" Easy it is for most of us to retreat when the command is given clearly and distinctly: "Fall back! Let the whole line fall back!" But it is another matter for us to stand still. It is another matter to patiently wait. Yet waiting is a very great element in spiritual success, as it is in temporal success. How much a factor is "the waiting crisis" in the successes of life can be well learned in the words which Dr. Cuyler taught a few years ago, when he said, "I have been conversant in my time with thousands of failures of talented men, both in New York and Brooklyn, and I can bear testimony that ninety-nine hundredths of all those failures were, without doubt, due to the lack of patience, both in a spiritual sense as well as in a temporal." It is to teach the important lessons of sanctified patience that I am preaching this sermon.

The waiting crisis comes to thousands upon thousands of faithful men and women in the struggle for a financial existence. It comes not to the lazy, good for nothing human beings, who think the world owes them a living, and, therefore, they do nothing. It comes not to the tramps, the loafers, the deadbeats, who, as deadbeats on the great highway seas of life, are a menace to all with whom they come in touch. But it comes to the young man who gets up promptly at 6 o'clock and goes to the store punctually on time. It comes to the conscientious lawyer and doctor and mechanic who are striving with all their power to do right. It comes to men and women

who in every sense are noble, who always seem to be on the verge of making a great success and yet never seem to be quite able to reach the goal.

Many Are True, but Unfortunate. These men are true and good men, but unfortunate men. They are what worldly people call "unlucky." We know there is no such thing as luck. Men are not lucky or unlucky, but there are some who seem to have more misfortunes than others; who, through no fault of their own, miss the good things of life. The strong man triumphs over them, but as the world witnesses his struggles under successive strokes of adverse fortune it calls him "unlucky." When old Mayer Anselm Rothschild, the founder of the famous banking house of Frankfurt-on-the-Maine, was dying, he called his children about him and gave to them this parting advice: "First, my sons, never plan any great movement without first consulting your mother; second, never have anything to do with an unlucky man." Mark this! Anselm Mayer Rothschild did not say, "Do not have any business dealings with a dishonest man." He took that for granted. But he did say "an unlucky man." You know who is that unlucky man. He is yourself. You are unlucky in the fact that just as you were about to go to college your father died and you were taken out of school and had to go to work. You are unlucky in the fact that just after you had saved up a little money and put it in the bank the cashier became a defaulter and you lost all. You are unlucky in the fact that just after you had learned to be a good draftsman and had a fine position about to be offered you fell and broke your arm or had your fingers cut off by having them caught in the cogs of a factory wheel and you had to start life all over again. You are unlucky because just as you were about to be appointed to a certain position an enemy lied about your character as an enemy lied about a young friend of mine who was about to become pastor of a prominent church in the east. Though your character in one sense was vindicated, yet the damage was done. Another stepped in and got the place, even as the poor invalid at the pool of Bethesda was pushed aside by others again and again when the angel of health "went down at a certain season into the pool and troubled the waters." After having been repeatedly struck down by misfortune after misfortune you are today on the verge of complete despair. You are saying to yourself: "Oh, I am always unlucky! What is the use of my trying any longer?"

Be Patient, Not Discouraged. Discouraged, are you? "Yes," you mutter, "fearfully discouraged." You have conscientiously done your level best. "Yes, I have done my level best. I can do nothing more." Oh yes, you can, my brother. You can let God now come and do the rest. You are simply "encamped before Pharaoh," between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon. God is going to open a way for you through the Red sea to escape the pursuing Philistines. How? I do not know. This, however, I do know. God will rescue you if you are patient, only patient. He will, if like Job amid the tragedy of a wrecked home and amid a ruined fortune and in the agonies of physical as well as mental pain, you can say, and still continue to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." God will show to you a direct means of escape if you will only stand still just where you are and continue to look for the salvation of the Lord. You may not now think it, but all things, even amid the greatest discouragements, all things are working together for good to them that love the Lord. After the darkest of nights there always comes the brightness of a light giving dawn. Amid the blackest of troubles there will always come a pillar of fire to lead God's children to a promised land. Trust him, brother. Continue to trust God. Be patient. Just go on and continue to do your level best. All things will ultimately come out right if you do. That is the teaching of this grand old text, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

But there is another class of heavers I find today encamped upon the Israelite hosts near Pharaoh. They are the men and the women who are not necessarily struggling for a financial existence, but who are unhappy and dissatisfied with the fields in which God has compelled them to labor. They know they could do better work amid other surroundings. Or they are saying to themselves: "I do not know why it is that all my labors should be mis-constructed and unappreciated. If God does not open to me another field of work soon I shall drop this position anyhow."

Do Your Work the Best You Can.

Going to give up your present position? You say you are not happy in it? Don't you do it, my brother. What you need in life in this waiting crisis of yours is a great big invigorating dose of patience. Stand still just where you are, and do your work the best way you can and see the salvation of the Lord. God does not, as a rule, call his workmen from nothing to something great, but from a small position of influence to a higher position of influence. When Christ wanted to select his cabinet and to fill the apostolic positions of the "fishers of men," he did not go into the market place, where he could find the loafers idling around. He went down to the shores of Lake Galilee and found two stalwart men casting their nets into the sea. He

called them to him and gave them the work which he had for them. He said to them: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." It is nearly always a hard struggle for a man in a small position to climb up into a higher position, but it is nearly always an almost impossible struggle for a man out of a job to be called to a fine position. Christ uttered sound philosophy when he said in his parable: "Take therefore the talent from him and give it unto him who hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." It is easy enough for the pastor of a successful church of New York to be called to a prosperous church of Chicago. But a minister without a pulpit, though he be a giant among preachers, has an almost insurmountable undertaking to be called to any strong pulpit. The man without a job is a man whose failure is stamped upon his brow, and every one looks at him with suspicion. Be patient. Everything will come out all right. Just be patient.

Not as Important as We Think.

But there is still another reason why I do not want you to give up that position which seems to fret you. As far as I can make out, you are getting in life just about as much as you deserve. Instead of complaining, you ought to get down on your knees and thank God for the position which he has given to you. Why should you expect God to make you his favorite child and allow you to rest upon a bed of roses? Are you any different from any of his other children? Are you so smart or so good or so humble that you have a right to expect more than they? Instead of grumbling about your small position, you should see men, in every way your superiors, physically, mentally and spiritually, occupying smaller positions than you. Be patient in that work God has given to you. Most of us desire, perhaps all of us, have all we deserve in life, and more too. If God wants us to go higher, he will open the way. If he does not open the way, then let us do what he wants us to do. You and I are not so important or so brilliant or so perfectly sanctified as some of us think we are. In order to impress upon you this fact, I would read to you a quaint piece of poetry by James Whitcomb Riley. It has helped and encouraged me much in life. I hope the reading will make you contented in the field of labor to which God has called you to work.

The signs are bad when folks commence A-finding fault with Providence And balking 'cause the world don't shake At every prancing step they take. No man is perfect till he can see How less than little he would be If he hung up his sign and said: "He hung his sign out anywhere."

My doctrine is to lay aside Contentions and be satisfied. Jest do your best, and praise or blame That follows, that counts just the same. I've noticed great success Is mixed with trouble, more or less. And it's the man who does the best That gets more kicks than all the rest.

But, roaming in and out among the Israelite hosts encamped at Pharaoh, I find the ranks of the Moslem army cursed and retarded with hangers on. There were many brave men in that army. Men there were like Joshua and Caleb, but there was also a host of lazy, good for nothing, as in every army, who expected others to do all the work. When the tents were to be lifted, they were not there; when the manna was to be collected, they were like the five foolish virgins who wanted to borrow the oil of the five wise virgins. And so today when I see a strong, willing man I inevitably see a lot of human leeches clinging to that man as barnacles stick to a ship's hull. Furthermore, today I see scores and hundreds of our hardworking men and women rebelling at the injustice by which others are trying to live off the results of the sweat of their brow.

Let me illustrate my thought by drawing a verbal picture of what we all know to be true: There are four of us boys, all brothers, born in a humble farmhouse away back in the country. Two of my brothers and myself are just happy-go-lucky boys. Oh yes, we work hard when we work, but we work just as little as we can, and when we have a dollar we always spend the whole dollar. If there is a country dance, my two brothers and I always go there. If a leisure hour, you can always find us lying around the village store or playing pranks upon the boys. We are not bad; we are just ordinary, happy-go-lucky, everyday boys. We are like most of boys. We do what we are told to do and do nothing more.

The Successful Man's Burden.

But I have a brother Jack. The young folks say he is queer and mean and stingy. Some people say he is crazy. My brother Jack is not lazy. He works just as hard as we do, but when he makes a dollar, instead of spending that dollar as we do, he saves it or goes and buys some books. Instead of loafing about the village store in the evening Jack is always home studying. If he is not crazy, Jack is certainly queer. One day Jack comes in and tells us he is going to teach winter school in order to go to college. We think then he is crazier still. After awhile Jack, by working all his summers and all winters, gets through college, and then comes home and tells us that he is going to the law school. We think he is crazier still. After awhile Jack, by years of self sacrifice and hard work, is graduated. Then he goes to New York city. After awhile my brother Jack pushes his way to the front of the New York bar. What is the result? Do we boys praise Jack for his labors? Do we say, "If we had worked as he worked we could be where he is?" Perhaps. But that is not the general rule of the average family. We immediately begin to complain because Jack does not send us money and help to support us. We take from him all we can get. And so,

when any man honestly tries to make a success out of life, he immediately has a lot of indigent, selfish, lazy folks about him trying to live off the results of his hard earned toil.

Some one listening to me says, "Yes, that is so." Then you turn and say: "What shall I do about my drunken brother's family? Shall I pay any more money to let him keep on drinking?" "What shall I do about my

daughter?" says another. "I do not want her to leave her husband, and yet I certainly do not want to keep on supporting both of them in their foolish extravagances." "What shall I do about my wayward boy?" says another. "Shall I let him go to the dogs and not support him any longer?" "What shall I do in reference to that lazy partner?" says another. "He won't work, and yet he expects half of the profits." "What shall I do in reference to my husband?" says a troubled wife. "He is always loafing around or entering into wild speculations which bring us in nothing to support the family." "What shall I do in reference to my wife?" says a troubled husband. "She spends my money right and left. She is more interested in euchre parties than in the economy of the home. Shall I leave her?" What shall you do, my friends? Well, I am not here to tell you in detail, but this I do assert in general: Do not let the injustices of the past blind your eyes to the pressing duties of the present. Because your kith and kin and business partners have been and are now doing wrong to you, do not you do wrong to them. Be patient. Be careful, and if you must err let it be upon the side of mercy. God does not tell you to weigh the past so much as to conscientiously solve the pressing responsibilities directly at hand. "Stand still!" before you snap the golden cords of affection which bind you to that wayward sister, that wayward brother, that wayward child, that wayward husband. "Stand still!" if you do not know what to do. "Stand still!" if you are patient when sickness comes and old age comes and the wearing faculties of mind and body seem to unfit you for the active duties of life. Be very patient when you seem to be like an old, worn-out horse turned out upon the commons to eat a little and sleep a little and live a little longer and then die. Some of us with great gusto in the days of our youth used to sing in Sunday school that old hymn:

Oh, to be nothing, nothing,
A broken and empty vessel.
For the Master's use made meet.

The Right Time to Die. But when the advancing years pass on, and by sickness or old age we seem to be laid away upon the shelf as useless by a busy world, then most of us do not appreciate the petition of that song prayer. We do not want to be "nothing, nothing." We want to be "something, something," and have that something a very active "something." Sometimes at the funeral of a strong man we see a suggestive floral tribute in a broken column. That means the man died in his prime. That means, most of us say, "Is it not too bad that he had to go when he had so much to live for?" But I do not think it takes nearly as much divine grace to die in your physical and mental prime as it takes to live on in physical invalidism or in decrepit old age. In the first instance a Christian man like a warrior is struck down at a blow. In the second instance a man is like an aged veteran in a soldier's home, like a Job's war charger smoldering the battle from afar and yet not able to answer the bugle call for the grand charge. The saddest scene during all my stay in the west was when in the Methodist Episcopal conference five noble men who had served their church as bishops long and faithfully were retired and placed upon the superannuated list. But, as God has placed some of you upon the great "waiting list" as physical or mental invalids, be patient. Trust him. Even in your retired field of waiting you have a work to do. It will all come out right. Yes, sick one and aged one, it will all come out right. You may not be able to understand God's ways now, but it will all come out right.

Thus, then, as the "waiting" lesson is the hardest of all gospel lessons to learn, I am going to close in the beautiful words of one whose poem has been very near and dear to me. I am preaching against my own impatience just as I am against yours. I know that a parent can never bring his child up right unless he teaches that child to learn to trust him and wait; therefore no child of God can ever trust God unless he is at times ready to "stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." These verses embody the whole thought of my text:

When my boy with eager questions,
Asking how and where and when,
Taxes all my store of wisdom,
Asking o'er and o'er again,
Questions off to which the answers
Give to others still the key,
I have said, to teach him patience,
Wait, my little one, and see.

And the words I taught my darling
Taught to me a lesson sweet,
Once when all the world seemed darkness
And the storm about me beat.
In the children's room I heard him,
With a child's sweet mimicry,
To the baby brother's cry:
Savior, wait, "Wait and see."

Like an angel's tender chiding
Came the darling's words to me,
Though my Father's ways were hidden,
Hiding me still, "Wait and see."
What are we but restless children,
Ever asking what shall be?
And the Father, in his wisdom,
Gently bids us "Wait and see."
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Passengers For New York and eastern cities should board in mid afternoon, leaving Cairo at 8:05 p. m. and arriving in New York at 7:50 the second morning.

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